

be entertaining to my readers; but may help to promote their improvement in many good and commendable qualities. It is true, indeed, that my language is very plain and homely. But what of that? As a good boy or a good girl is never the worse, nor will be less honoured and esteemed, because he is poor and wears an old hat and a tattered coat; so a good book is not a whit the less valuable (in my opinion) because the style is plain and in common use. Besides, as the good little folks, for whose improvement I am writing, have not skill enough, perhaps, (or at least not many of them) to make use of a Dictionary, I thought it would be most for their advantage to avoid all hard words and uncommon phrases, and to confine myself to pure *English*. I must acknowledge, indeed, that many petty writers, such as I am, have acted otherwise; and stuffed their little books with so many out-of-the-way expressions, and so many words which are borrowed from the learned and other languages, that at last they have made the

the inside of them as fine and tawdry as the gilt paper that covers them. But in this I think they have done amiss; for instead of instructing their little readers (as they ought to have done) in plain good sense, they have only taught them to talk *gibberish*.

Nor is this all; for some of them have likewise presented my little masters and misses with so many idle nonsensical stories, and such a number of silly and unmeaning rhymes, that they have, in the end, made greater babies of them than they were before; or, at least, they have done them little more service than if they had given them a rattle or a hobby-horse. Perhaps they will tell me that their only design was to teach them to read. But to read what?—For my part, I have so good an opinion of them (and why should I not?) that I believe them to be able, even while they are learning to read, to learn also, in some measure, to exercise their reason and understanding; and, of the two, the latter, I think, is the most desirable